

## Princeton Update January 2006: ALA Midwinter meeting

**Acquisitions:** The June update noted that concern about potential over expenditure at the end of last fiscal year had precipitated a dramatic decrease in ordering activity. Ordering has not resumed at the usual rate this fiscal year. The modest increase in the acquisitions budget this year, coupled with continued caution in collection development may be to blame for this phenomenon. However, we are beginning to wonder if we have reached the tipping point in the balance between print and electronic acquisitions. It is too soon to tell.

We continue to define “specialist” positions in acquisitions as support staff vacancies occur. Having noted the rapid response staff in a previous update, we have now defined and filled positions to specialize in video/audio materials acquisitions, and in rare book/special collections acquisitions. Next on our agenda is to more fully explore the possibility of defining a position for electronic journals acquisitions support. This represents a conscious movement away from a philosophy of having all staff trained to do everything, to recognition that the acquisitions universe has become so complex specialization is required.

**Cataloging:** Following last year’s reorganization, and with the hold being reduced in size, more cataloging purchased, and at least a momentary downturn in monographic acquisitions, this seemed an opportune moment to pause for reflection. Professional cataloging staff attended a day long retreat to consider the future of professional cataloging contributions at Princeton. Planned by our acting head of cataloging with input solicited from all constituent groups, including acquisitions, collection development, and public services, and facilitated by our staff development librarian, the goal was to take professional catalogers away from their daily grind and provide a thoughtful opportunity to discuss what next for this group of staff. By all accounts the day was well worth the effort, although it is too soon to detail specific recommendations.

**Circulation:** Scheduled system down time during the summer allowed for a significant amount of shelf reading. During July we also conducted a pilot project, conceived by our acting head of cataloging, to gather data to assess the cost of barcoding the remainder of the collection, which we estimate to be 500,000 volumes. Based on the pilot, we believe a two-person team can barcode approximately 100 volumes/hour, and have developed a grant proposal seeking to fund the barcoding of 41,000 volumes in four sublocations in the main library. Having the entire collection barcoded would facilitate the provision of management data, aid in transferring material from the main library to our storage facility, and allow for a much overdue inventory. We have recently redefined two positions in Circulation, one to serve as an administrator for the undergraduate reserve collection, and another to coordinate shelving activities from noon until 8 pm Sunday through Thursday. Our usual shelving crew works Monday to Friday with the typical shift ending before 4 pm. This is a first step toward expanding staff presence in the stacks during times when more users are present.

**Electronic resources:** We have implemented Endeavor's Meridian system, although we would call this a "soft" roll out. It is still very much the province of our digital resources coordinator and a few back-room staff. We are just beginning to address the issues of data export and import on an ongoing basis to keep the system up to date. We are looking forward to the next release of the system shortly, and expect this upgrade will permit broader use by collection development staff.

**Metadata and digital collections:** Digital collections are continuing to expand, as you can see at the following link <http://diglib1.princeton.edu>. The Digital Collections Operations Group has been expanded with the addition of a cataloger.